CHRISTMAS LIGHT

Ethel Calvert Phillips

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She was just the age when girls are apt to treat lightly the subject of eating substantial food. Her wise mother knew that young daughters, and in fact the whole family, would eat what was on the table if she first served something hot and appetizing. She knew that hot bouillon made from STEERO bouillon cubes was just the dish to serve. Its rich, meaty flavor was all that was needed to coax a lagging appetite. Put a STEERO bouillon cube into each cup and simply add boiling water. Put STEERO bouillon cubes on your order list today. The trade mark STEERO is on every cube.

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tween now and Christmas, if you hurry and write me. There is an exceptional opening for you *right now*. It will require only a few spare hours, will not cost you a penny, will not interfere with your other plans, yet you can make enough, easily, for all your Christmas gifts and have some "left over" for those January bills or a snug little bank account!

Mothers and daughters alike can make these extra dollars. A married woman who wants money for her children's Christmas and a girl in her teens who just *has to have* a new party dress both can obtain the money for what they want if they write me now!

MRS. CLARA PRATT is one of the many JOURNAL readers who have already availed themselves of this plan. What delightful success has been hers! Mrs. Pratt used to worry constantly about where the money for extra expenses of her household was coming from—but no longer. Now she knows how to make $25 or more herself within ten days.

It came about in this way: This little home-maker and her husband have just bought an attractive bungalow, and it has been what Clara has laughingly termed a "tight squeeze" to meet the payments and keep those three lively youngsters of theirs in shoes and stockings and rubbers, not to mention a hundred and one other unexpected demands that have been made on an all-too-slender purse. And here comes Christmas! Clara Pratt, motherlike, does not want those little folks of hers to be disappointed and slighted at Christmastime, and *they won't be*. Their mother is going to see to that!

For Mrs. Pratt has read my message here in THE HOME JOURNAL, addressed to all you JOURNAL readers: "If you want more money, you off without any more delay.

Are you married? A business girl? A teacher? A stay-at-home? Still in school? No difference! Come ahead! Use this dandy plan of ours, as Mrs. Pratt describes it, to make money in *your* spare minutes. You should make every bit as much as these others. And without a penny of expense to you.

Mrs. Bornot is saving to pay for her little home. Marie Loizeaux is working for music lessons and Christmas presents and a bank account. Mrs. Graves wants a new buffet. Josephine Keller likes to take a nice trip away every so often. And these girls and women have so far made from $20 to *$150* apiece, to spend as they please. They, too, will receive a great deal more before Christmas.

A college member has made $60 "without much work" to pay for pretty clothes and good times. One mother has made $70 to send her two little girls to school in town. A grandmother made $10 in a single day recently, which will be spent for the filling of certain little Christmas stockings.

Sit down this very minute and write me a little note saying "Tell me how Mrs. Pratt and others are making so much extra money at this season of the year. I want to make some, too, between now and Christmas." You will! I'll send the "way to do it" by return mail as soon as I receive your letter. Address me as the

Manager of The Girls' Club

THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL
380 INDEPENDENCE SQUARE
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SHE FINGERED THE HEM OF THE CLOAK WRAPPED ABOUT THE YOUNG MOTHER, BUT SHE COULD NOT BRING HERSELF TO TOUCH THE CHILD

Christmas Light

By ETHEL CALVERT PHILLIPS

Illustration by Arthur E. Becher

IN A LITTLE garden in Bethlehem, many and many a year ago, four scarlet poppies stood side by side, swaying gently on their slim green stalks in the soft afternoon wind. A little girl came running over the grass and halted before them. "How beautiful you are!" said the little girl, whose name was Naomi and who was eight years old. She clasped her hands in delight and stood smiling down upon the flowers. Her cheeks were as rosy as the poppies, and she had dark curling hair and gentle brown eyes and wore a gay little robe of scarlet-and-yellow striped stuff, while upon her bare brown feet were tied soft leather sandals. "You are mine for I made you grow," she said to the poppies, "and you are the most beautiful flowers in all our lovely garden." In the center stood an orange tree, and under it had been placed a wooden bench. A tall hedge of prickly thorns prevented passers-by on the narrow village street from peeping in. At one end a heavy grapevine clambered over a trellis, while at the other there were several rich clumps of myrtle. Below the thorn hedge stood a row of bold flaunting tulips, and there were two flower beds, one of white, the other of tall red lilies.

The garden was indeed a pleasant place, and Naomi's happiest hours were spent here, whether playing peacefully alone or amusing Baby Jonas or when the family gathered together under the orange tree—father and mother, brother Ezra, Baby Jonas and herself.

To be sure there were vines and flowers growing on the roof of Naomi's house, which was often used as a place to sit in the cool of the day. The dwelling looked like nothing so

the limitations of the Daly Theater, and that a desire for a novelty sometimes led the manager astray. Henry Irving and many others called attention to the rather extraordinary and fussy confusion of the staging. At the end of one of the acts there was a great panorama which moved across the back of the stage to suggest the moving of the barge of Theseus. At the very end, profile figures on wings or side pieces were pushed onto the stage; painted people were waving things and these canvas people did not jibe with the real people on the stage. Irving thought it worse than stupid.

In the revival of As You Like It Ada Rehan was Rosalind, Henrietta Crosman, Celia, Isabel Irving, Audrey, James Lewis was Touchstone, George Clark, Jaques, Hobart Bosworth, Charles, and I was Orlando. This was the first appearance of Henrietta Crosman at Daly's Theater. I had played in a scene from As You Like It once before, and that was at a benefit for Fanny Davenport at the Fifth Avenue Theater. On that occasion, I played Jaques de Bois, the second son of old Sir Rowland de Bois. This is a small part and the character comes on only at the end of the play. In that performance Lawrence Barrett was the Jaques. Afterwards he came over and talked to me. I had never met him. He had known my father, and he knew my mother and often visited her in Philadelphia.

The following spring we played As You Like It on the lawn of the Farwell estate at Lake Forest, near Chicago. It had been raining for days and the ground was so damp that it was necessary for the women to wear rubbers. It was of course a daylight performance, and we did not know how to make up; that is, adapt our regular make-up for daylight.

We appealed to William Gilbert, who had once been with a circus, but as he had been a clown his ideas of make-up were not very helpful to those of us who were supposed to be living in the Forest of Arden.

PHOTOS. FROM THEATER COLLECTION, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT—JOHN DREW, JAMES LEWIS, ADA REHAN, CHARLES FISHER, VIRGINIA DREHER, MRS. G. H. GILBERT, OTIS SKINNER, MAY IRWIN, IN "A NIGHT OFF"

"Looked Like an Effeminate Indian"

GEORGE CLARK suggested that we use some stuff called bolarmenia. This is a brownish make-up that is used for Indian characters, and he thought that a little of this on our cheeks would give us the healthy appearance of people who live in the open air. He imparted this information with so much assurance that we thought he must know what he was talking about. I went on with this stuff on my face. My appearance in the mirror certainly was not too reassuring, but I fancied that the distance of the spectators from the stage in this beautiful amphitheater would take care of things and offset to some degree, at least, the strange-looking image that I saw in my mirror.

In the scene where they try to dissuade Orlando from wrestling with the great fellow Charles, Celia has a speech:

> Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years. You have seen cruel proof of this man's strength: if you saw yourself with your eyes or knew yourself with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise. We pray you, for your own sake, to embrace your own safety and give over this attempt.

During this speech Ada Rehan looked at me for the first time, and apparently she had never seen anything so funny; and she laughed so much that she was scarcely able to give the speech of Rosalind:

> Do, young sir; your reputation shall not therefore be mispriséd: we will make it our suit to the duke that the wrestling might not go forward.

"You looked like an effeminate Indian," she told me afterwards.

AS PETRUCHIO IN "THE TAMING OF THE SHREW" MR. DREW SCORED ONE OF HIS GREATEST SUCCESSES

OTIS SKINNER, EDITH KINGDON, AND JOHN DREW

My long-haired wig added to this impression. We found out later that George Clark had just tried out an experiment on us, and that he had not played under similar conditions before.

In the wrestling scene upon this occasion Hobart Bosworth, who was the Charles—the giant that Orlando throws—did not take the ordinary precautions that we took in this scene upon the stage. He thought that the soft, damp ground would protect him. When he was thrown he landed on the point of his shoulder, and it was so painful that he uttered a ringing oath. Fortunately, the distances were so great that he was heard only by the actors. All together our open-air performance was not a happy one.

There was an all-star performance of the same play—As You Like It—for some charity given on the property of Agnes Booth at Manchester on the Massachusetts coast one summer. Crane, Robson, Frank Mayo, Rose Coghlan and many other famous people were in the cast. Mayo, who was a great popular favorite, was the Jaques. He had some very long waits, and as it was a very warm day, he had walked over to the hotel for a cooling glass. In the midst of a conversation with a friend he was interrupted by a call boy. Jaques was wanted. It was his great entrance into the Forest of Arden. It was time for the speech, "The Seven Ages of Man." Thinking to save time, he took a short cut, which led over some fences. As he got near where the stage was he began reciting his speech to give the impression that he really wasn't late but was on the job all the time. This is an old dodge, often resorted to in the theater, but Mayo had not calculated his distances very closely and when he arrived on the scene, panting and breathless, his speech, "The Seven Ages of Man," was all gone.

ADA REHAN AS ROSALIND, JOHN DREW AS ORLANDO, IN "AS YOU LIKE IT"

Love's Labour's Lost was the last of the Shaksperian revivals during my time at Daly's. After I had left, Ada Rehan played both Viola and Portia, but Katharine was always her great character.

Willie Collier, who made his first appearance on the stage as the page in The Induction of The Taming of the Shrew, came into the theater as a call boy. Even as a boy he had an extraordinary manner of saying perfectly absurd and ridiculous things with the utmost seriousness. Lewis, a comedian himself, took the greatest delight in Collier and encouraged him greatly. Collier was an excellent mimic, and his imitation of Daly was uncanny.

The Baseball Club Breaks Up

ONE day Collier was talking to Lewis and myself in a dressing room and imitating Daly. John Moore, the stage manager, was looking for Daly to consult him about something upon which an immediate decision was required.

He heard Daly talking in our dressing room. He stood aghast outside the door, for the things that the supposed Daly was saying were unlike anything that Daly could possibly have said. The matter was urgent, and he had to interrupt. When he knocked and entered and found that Daly really wasn't there he was so dazed that he left the room without a word.

We never heard further from the incident, but we impressed upon Collier that he must keep his imitations of Daly for our ears alone. Lewis enjoyed them so much that he was loath to give them up altogether.

We were all very sorry when Willie Collier left the company. I was especially so, because it broke up our baseball club. He was a capital pitcher and an extremely good organizer. We had no catcher and usually recruited someone from the property room of the theater we were playing to fill that position. Sometimes a scene shifter received Collier's delivery. Steve Murphy, who later, as Steve Grattan, played a number of parts at the old Lyceum, was really a good first baseman. Otis Skinner played second and I played short. Joe Holland was at third. In right field was Wood, a son of Mrs. John Wood, that splendid comedienne and great favorite of the London stage. Frederick Bond was in left field and Thomas Patten, ex-postmaster of New York, played center. We had great fun, and it kept us all in splendid physical shape. When we had no games to play we practiced every morning. We played on tour with local teams. In Chicago, on one trip, we had two fine games—one

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much as a square box turned upside down, with only a door cut in the front and not a window to break the smooth white sides. Within there was a single room round which ran a bench where were kept the gay quilts, tightly rolled, which made the only beds Naomi knew. Here, too, lay the cushions upon which the family sat when at meals round the table, which was then pulled out from the wall. There was a great carved chest in which were kept the Sabbath clothes, the crescent of coins which belonged to Naomi's mother and which she wore upon her head as an ornament on festive occasions, and the long parchment rolls of Scripture in which Naomi's father took the keenest pride. At the door stood a tall water jar with herbs floating on the top to keep the water cool.

In a small building near by stood the oven where Naomi's mother did her baking and which she used in common with several other families. It was often a meeting place for the children, who hung about the door on baking days hoping for hot crumbs. "I would that my Aunt Miriam used our oven," Naomi often thought, "for she bakes every day, and oh, such good things as she makes!"

NAOMI'S aunt kept the village inn or khan that stood just outside the city gates on one of the little hills upon which Bethlehem was built. Many travelers stopped at the khan, for the village lay only a mile to the right of the great road which led from Jerusalem, six miles away, to the old town of Hebron, and then down into the far-away, mysterious land of Egypt. Where the road from Bethlehem joined the Jerusalem highway stood the tomb of Rachel, and many a time had Naomi, loitering in the courtyard of the inn, heard pious pilgrims, fresh from the spot, tell the stories of Rachel and Jacob and their sons, Joseph and Benjamin. Her little head was packed full of the stories of the great people of her race.

Ezra, eleven years old, went to school in the synagogue every day with the other boys of the village and diligently studied the Law and the Prophets. At home, Naomi was taught by her mother not only the care of the house, but the history of the Hebrew people, their songs, their prayers and their hopes.

But this summer afternoon she was thinking of nothing save of the pretty blossoms that now swung before her after so many days of patient toil and care. Then she saw her mother in the doorway and eagerly called to her: "Come, mother, come. My poppies are all out, every one. Four of them in a row! See; even the smallest one that I feared would not bloom at all. There is one for each of you—father, mother, Ezra, Jonas. The smallest one is for Jonas."

Naomi's mother came smiling down the path. She carried a water pitcher or urn, and astride her left shoulder sat baby Jonas, steadying himself by clutching his mother's thick, dark hair.

"The flowers are beautiful, Naomi," she said pleasantly. "They well repay thee for all thy patience and care. I go now to the fountain for water. It lacks but half an hour to sundown. Watch thy little brother Jonas well and keep him happy until I return." And slipping Jonas from her shoulder to the grass, she stepped quickly out into the village street, her urn securely balanced on her head.

Jonas crept over to the bench and, dragging himself up upon his unsteady legs, looked into his sister's face with a smile.

"Come with me and see the pigeons," Naomi told him.

Behind the house stood a dovecot made of mud. Inside were two wide-mouthed earthen jars that served as nesting boxes. The pigeons were stepping majestically about on the ground, the sun touching their soft, gray feathers with blue and green and rose. Jonas made several lunges at them in the hope of capturing a new plaything, but he succeeded only in stubbing his toe and sitting down hard upon the ground.

"No, thou must not touch them," said Naomi, helping him to his feet and brushing off the dirt. "But I know something that thou canst do. It is my secret, but I do not mind telling thee because thou canst not talk. Thou mayst help me dig a well!"

She guided Jonas back into the garden and over to a bare spot of ground behind the largest of the myrtle bushes.

"SIT ye down, Jonas," said Naomi, sinking cross-legged to the ground. "I mean to dig the well here; it will be so handy for mother. Then never will she have to walk down to the fountain unless she likes. You take that stick and I will use this one."

For a few moments the little girl worked industriously, loosening the dry sun-baked soil, while Jonas scratched vigorously with his sharp-pointed stick. Then suddenly—"Oh! oh!" she screamed, and jumped to her feet.

Something cold and wet had been placed against the back of her neck, and little shivers were running over her as she turned and saw her brother Ezra behind her, smiling at her fright. In his arms he held a small white lamb, and it was this little animal's nose that had been pressed to Naomi's neck.

"How unkind thou art," cried Naomi. "And didst thou hear what I said about the well? Oh, Ezra, it was a secret.

"Do not tell mother, wilt thou? I would fain surprise her. Promise thou wilt not tell, Ezra."

Ezra's only answer was to laugh and shake his head. Though he had no intention of telling, he wanted to tease Naomi a little before making any promises.

He was far more gentle and kindly than many another brother in those days in old Palestine. For in the Jewish family, girls were not valued so highly as boys and were made to feel their unimportance in many ways that would be highly displeasing to little sisters to-day. But in the household of Samuel the weaver, Naomi's lot had not been quite that of the ordinary Jewish girl. Her father was proud of his bright, lovable little daughter and had made her his special pet. Her mother was careful that Naomi seldom missed the daily lesson that kept the girl, to her delight, only a short way behind Ezra on the road of knowledge.

EZRA, though he felt his superiority as a boy and first-born of his family, could not long resist Naomi's pleading. "What wilt thou give me if I do not tell?" he asked.

"The first bright shekel I find in the highway," answered Naomi saucily. She was smiling now and gently stroking the little lamb's nose. "What lamb is this, Ezra?" she asked. "It seems sleepy, poor little creature. Look, its eyes are half shut."

"It is one of the Temple flock," answered Ezra. "But it has a blemish. It runs on three legs, and it does not see very well. It is not fit for Temple use, and Shepherd Eli gave it to me this afternoon for my own."

By Temple flock Ezra meant the sheep that were destined to be used as sacrifices in the great Temple at Jerusalem, and which were encamped all the year round on the hills outside the city. The shepherds of the flock were friendly to the boy, who declared he meant when a man to be a Temple shepherd himself. Ezra spent most of his spare time with them, helping them in their work and listening with delight to their thrilling stories of encounters with wolves and jackals.

"Stand up, Three Legs," said Ezra, putting his lamb on the ground and showing Naomi its shrunken limb. "I mean to make a little wagon and teach Three Legs to draw it. And if he is not able to do that I shall sell him for whatever I can get."

"Oh, no, Ezra," said Naomi. "He is sick; he is not able to draw a wagon. Give him to me and let me take care of him."

Ezra shook his head. "I will sell him first," said he with determination.

"Sell him to me," cried Naomi. "I will give thee anything thou mayst ask." The lamb had toppled over in a little heap and was looking patiently and with half-closed eyes into Naomi's face. It seemed to her that she would gladly give her dearest possession if she might have the lamb for her own to nurse and care for.

"What hast thou to give?" asked Ezra shrewdly. "Thy poppies?" He had heard his aunt say that very day: "I need poppies sorely for my brew for the palsy, and not a single one has bloomed in the khan garden this year." Surely four poppies would be worth a rich cake or two or perhaps even a piece of money, while the lamb could never draw a wagon and the prospect of selling a sick animal was small.

"My poppies?" Naomi looked aghast. "All four?" The lamb stirred and with a little sigh of content snuggled his nose into the palm of Naomi's hand. "Take them!" Naomi gathered the lamb in her arms. "Only let me not see thee"; and she turned her back upon Ezra and shut her eyes.

Quickly he gathered the flowers and ran out of the garden.

Naomi opened her eyes. She gave one look at her despoiled flower bed and bent again over the lamb. "I am glad, Three Legs," she said. "Thou art much better than many poppies, thou poor little creature."

ONE Sabbath morning Naomi and her mother and Ezra were on their way to the synagogue. They chose back streets as they went, and they met only women and children on their way, for the front roads on the Sabbath day were given up to the men.

Naomi was happy as she walked quietly along, holding fast to her mother's hand, for she wore her new hyacinth-blue robe that her mother had spun and her father had woven for her.

Ezra had other thoughts, and presently he whispered in Naomi's ear: "In two years' time I shall be a Son of the Law, and then I shall sit on the men's side in the synagogue and walk on the front streets on Sabbath. Thou and mother will have to come alone."

Naomi shook her head. "Jonas will walk with us then," she whispered back. "Boaster!"

She did not really blame Ezra for his lordly words and air, for she knew how every Jewish boy looked forward to what was called his Day of Freedom, when by a prayer in the synagogue he was made a Son of the Law. Then he would be no longer a child, but a young man. His school days would be over. He would choose a trade and begin to earn his own living. But it was a comfort to think that with Ezra gone, little Jonas would trot along by her side, and she was dwelling on this idea when Aunt Miriam overtook them.

Aunt Miriam's husband, Simon, was a wealthy man in the village of Bethlehem as the owner of the guest house or khan, which was believed to have been the dwelling of Boaz and Ruth and the birthplace of King David himself.

Aunt Miriam loosened the veil that was pulled across her face and spoke briefly to Naomi's mother as she joined her. "I shall come to see thee to-night after sundown. I go to Jerusalem to-morrow, and there may be room in the cart for a certain good little maid."

Naomi's heart leaped. Did Aunt Miriam mean her? What other little girl might she take with her? She longed to ask outright: "Dost thou mean to take me to Jerusalem with thee, Aunt Miriam?"

But they had reached the flat-roofed little synagogue and, once inside the gate, the children silently followed their mother and aunt into the women's court and seated themselves on the mats that covered the stone floor.

NAOMI'S mind was so occupied by the thought of a possible trip to Jerusalem that she forgot to peep, according to her wont, through the lattice that separated the men's court from that of the women, in the hope of seeing her father. She usually watched with interest while the sacred rolls were taken from their curtained shrine, before which burned the holy lamp, and their outer cover of gold-embroidered silk and inner cover of linen removed. But this morning she scarcely heard the voice of the visiting rabbi who read the lesson for the day.

The Sabbath day, indeed, seemed endless to the eager little girl. All work and play were forbidden. No fire might be lighted, no bed made. And not until Sabbath was over would the trip to Jerusalem be discussed. Naomi sat alone in the shade of the fig tree that grew beside their door and watched the great sun flame through the bright Syrian sky until her eyes burned and ached; but still it was not sundown. At last she curled herself up on the floor of the house with heavy-eyed Three Legs at her side and fell asleep.

When she woke it was the First Watch of the Evening, six o'clock, and the crimson sun was sinking out of sight behind the Judean hills. Naomi sprang up and ran into the garden. There on the bench under the orange tree sat her father and mother and Aunt Miriam.

"And so," Aunt Miriam was saying, "since Simon is still sick with a heavy summer cold, nothing will do but I must ride to Jerusalem to-morrow with the load of grapes." Simon had large vineyards and owned many olive trees, besides being host at the inn. "To be sure, Jacob is a good serving lad and manages well without his master. But there is no one, after himself, who makes a better bargain than I, Simon says, and so to-morrow Jacob and I start at sunrise with the bullock cart, and no doubt there will be room among the baskets of grapes for Naomi, if thou wilt permit her to go."

Naomi, at her father's elbow, glanced imploringly into his face.

Finally, to Naomi's great relief, her father gave a nod of consent. "It is kind of thee, Sister Miriam," he said, "to think of giving our little daughter this pleasure."

"Oh, father," cried Naomi, throwing her arms about her father's neck, "how good I mean to be always after this! And, mother, which am I to wear, my new blue robe or my yellow-and-red striped one? I am really to go to Jerusalem. Oh, what will Ezra say when he hears the good news I have to tell him!"

THE next morning at daybreak, when the purple shadows lay heavily in the east and the sky was still gray overhead, Naomi, wearing a gay-little cloak of scarlet over her best blue robe, ran hastily down the stony road that led to the Bethlehem khan. The drowsy gatekeeper had already unlocked the heavy town gates.

At sight of Naomi, whom he knew well, he uttered a sleepy "Peace be with thee!"

"With thee be peace!" piped Naomi in return, and hurried on down the hill.

There before her at the crossroads stood the old khan with its great wall of stone and its stout gate behind which all night long sat a watchman on the alert. Below the inn lay the very fields among which Ruth, long, long ago, had gleaned the golden corn, and where later King David as a shepherd lad had tended his flock.

Naomi slipped through the open gate into the courtyard of the khan and stood for a moment watching the bustle and confusion of the scene before her. In the center of the court was the fountain, and round it now crowded the pilgrims and travelers, drawing water for the morning meal or in which to wash before eating. The archways which lined the wall formed the rooms of the ancient inn, for the building at the end of the court, in which Simon the host and Aunt Miriam lived, was

(Continued on Page 146)

"Noel, Noel"

Painted by Jules Guerin

Christmas Waits at Old Christ Church, Philadelphia

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Christmas Light

(Continued from Page 17)

not open to strangers. Shelter and food were not provided within. Each man in his little archway must spread his own carpet, light his own brazier, cook his own food and eat from his own dish.

Naomi looked with interest at the patient camels already kneeling to receive their loads. Here were the merchants spreading their wares—gold work from Cairo; shawls of Tyrian dye, royal purple or scarlet; rich perfumes in their vases of alabaster, large and small. Naomi was staring so intently that she did not see the serving lad Jacob until he was close upon her.

"Thy aunt calls for thee," he said. "The cart stands ready loaded and we start as soon as thou hast eaten."

Noami hurried into the house, where her Aunt Miriam paused in her brisk stepping about the room.

"HERE is a bowl of hot pottage and a warm cake for thee, Naomi. Eat all of it," she commanded.

So Naomi ate her lentil pottage and munched her cake in a quiet corner and was long finished when Aunt Miriam was at last ready to start.

The bullock cart stood loaded with baskets piled high with great bunches of purple grapes. Over them were spread the dewy green leaves of the vine to protect the fruit from the sun and to keep it fresh and moist. Aunt Miriam, with a sigh of relief, settled herself in place in the front of the cart. Naomi was tucked into a comfortable corner between two great brown baskets of woven rushes. Jacob, standing at the cattle's head, cracked his long whip, the animals strained forward, the cart wheels creaked and turned and they were off for Jerusalem.

The road to Jerusalem stretched white and hot in the blazing sunshine. The deep blue sky was without a cloud, and the insects, hidden in the roadside grass, hummed in the heat. Everything was interesting to Naomi. She stared at the dusty gray olive trees, the shabby scrub oaks, the low-branched sycamores as if she had not been familiar with them all her life. The few sheep she spied nibbling the sparse grass on the rocky hillsides were surely whiter than those at home.

Tap, tap, tap!

Naomi peered about, and Aunt Miriam sat up straight at this sound upon the road.

Tap, tap, tap!

Now the shuffling of cautious feet was to be heard too.

Down the Jerusalem highway came six men walking in single file, each with a staff in hand and the other hand resting upon the shoulder of the man before him. They were all blind! Even their guide, who tapped the ground as he walked, was sightless, "the blind leading the blind."

NAOMI stared curiously. She had often seen as many as a dozen blind men walking in such a row, and they were always to be found by the wayside or near the village gates at home, in company with the lame and the helpless, holding out a little bowl for money or food.

"Jacob!" called Aunt Miriam.

She took a piece of money from her purse, securely fastened to her belt, and Jacob, without being told, dropped it in the bowl of the blind leader. He was accustomed to the charity of his good master and mistress.

The blind men at sound of the cart had drawn up by the side of the road, and now they leaned upon their staffs and turned their sightless faces toward their unseen benefactress. They were glad of an excuse to rest.

Aunt Miriam, in response to the thanks and blessings showered upon her for her gift, called: "Peace be unto thee, friends! We hasten on to Jerusalem before the sun mounts high. May all good things await thee in Bethlehem!"

Up the steep hill climbed the bullock cart and round a curve in the road and on to the Bethlehem gate of the city, where entered all the trade and travel from Egypt and the sea. Jacob justified their presence in the city to the haughty Roman guard, and presently came Solomon the goldbeater, Uncle Simon's friend, by whose order the load of grapes had been brought to the city. He and Jacob the serving lad haggled over the load. But at last Jacob came to report to his mistress the sum offered, and since she was satisfied the bargain was soon made. On they went through the narrow, dingy streets with their overhanging houses that made a pleasant shade to the home of Simon's sister Anna, where they rested and ate, and later in the day, when the first evening breezes were drifting down the dark ravines that swept round the city, set out to climb the steep lanes that led toward Mount Moriah on which the Temple stood. Built of white marble and glittering with gold, it dazzled the eyes of little village-bred Naomi and made her heart thrill as she gazed up the flights of steps at the House of God. Martha, the small daughter of Anna, stood at the little girl's elbow, gazing about, too, but not with the same eager interest that Naomi showed, since a visit to the Temple was no great rarity to her.

The Court of the Gentiles was a sort of sacred market place, and Naomi and little Martha, as they walked about, held tight to each other when they passed the pens of sheep and oxen destined to be burnt offerings. Here the seller of doves and pigeons kept his cots, for many a worshiper could not afford to buy a kid or a lamb.

"ART thou ready to leave the Temple, child?" asked Aunt Miriam, coming up behind Naomi as she stood gazing in at a penful of young lambs. "Wilt thou be able to tell all this to Ezra, think you?"

Naomi made no reply. She was wondering why at times the sheep looked so strangely blurred, and why little black specks seemed to dance before her eyes. "Over there is a little lamb that looks like my Three Legs, Aunt Miriam," said she. "I am glad he is not here, shut up in one of these great pens."

She moved listlessly along, and when her aunt took her hand she clung to her so heavily that good Aunt Miriam stopped short on the side of the hill. "What ails thee, child?" said she, bending over Naomi. "Thou art not like thyself. Thine eyes look strangely heavy, even like those of little Three Legs. Art thou ill?"

"Nay," said Naomi. Surely to have sudden pains shoot through one's eyes was not to be ill.

"The child is weary," said little Martha's mother kindly. "She has had a long journey to-day besides this visit to the Temple."

But Naomi pulled pettishly away when Anna placed her hand upon her forehead to see if she were feverish.

Aunt Miriam beckoned to Jacob, who had walked near them all the way, and when he came forward she said: "Carry the little maid home, Jacob. She is exceedingly weary and needs a night's rest."

Naomi, without a protest, turned to Jacob and gladly hid her heavy, aching eyes upon his broad shoulder.

"I am like Three Legs," thought Naomi as the procession moved homeward. "But then Three Legs has been sick a long, long time, and I shall be well in the morning."

"MOTHER, is it sunrise yet?"

"No, Naomi, it but nears the end of the Third Watch."

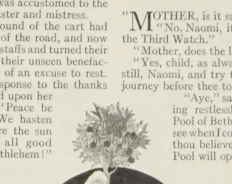
"Mother, does the lamp still burn?"

"Yes, child, as always, on the table. Lie still, Naomi, and try to sleep. Thou hast a journey before thee to-day."

"Aye," said the little girl, turning restlessly. "I know—to the Pool of Bethesda. Perhaps I shall see when I come home to-day. Dost thou believe that the Angel of the Pool will open mine eyes?"

"Yea, child, I do believe," answered her mother. "Thou shalt see again."

"And then I shall help thee once more about the house"



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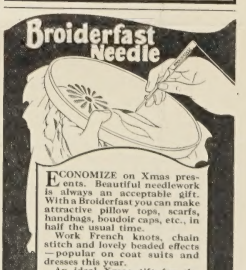

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P. O. Box 834 H Detroit, Mich.

"Brite and Fair"

In Which Dollars Rain Into the Christmas Fund of the Stockton Woman's Club

By CLAIRE WALLIS

EVERYONE knows Stockton or towns just like it. There is a bustling High Street, churches of every denomination, a clean brick high school, bank, post office, several movies, a diminutive town library, a town hall, and down one of the quieter streets where the elms arch high overhead there is a wide, low house with classic, hospitable doorway and a general air of being up and doing in a dignified, conventional way. It is Stockton's Woman's Club, responsible for that "come again" feeling that strangers take away with them on the Limited, which passes through Stockton at noon. It is in the homelike rooms with their yielding davenports, crackling fires and magazine-laden tables that plans are laid for Stockton's entertainment, education, civic reforms and welfare movements.

Membership is not limited; so, when the club starts something, all Stockton feels a proprietary interest in making it a howling success, from Mattie Davis, who has the paper route, to silly little Chloe Harrison, who burns up the asphalt in her clubby roadster and calls the traffic cop by his first name.

There was the "Brite and Fair," for instance, given for the Christmas For All Fund. Does the name puzzle you? It did Stockton. Metaphorically speaking, it had them all scratching their heads when the posters first appeared. These sprang up the day after Thanksgiving in the post office, bank, and store windows, and though everyone recognized the name as borrowed from a certain bad boy's diary, what it promised was hard to foretell. The notices were worded like weather forecasts; something like this:

WEATHER FORECAST

For Stockton and vicinity, evenings of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday December 7th, 8th and 9th

BRITE AND FAIR

In the Town Hall

If we don't prove good weather prophets we pay. If we do you dig into your jeans for a quarter.

That's "fair" enough for anybody!

ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE, WOMAN'S CLUB

A CHRISTMAS FOR ALL FUND

Of course it got whispered about that this had to do with a bazaar and entertainment, but just what nature it would assume was kept very secret, the committee believing in suspense to bring in the shekels.

On the first night the air was clear and nipping and the stars looked all polished up for the occasion. Because the committee had "proved itself a good weather prophet" and provided a night "brite and fair," admission quarters were collected at the door. This was cleverly arranged for by having a rainbow made from crêpe paper over the doorway and two pots of gold, one at each end, to hold the money. They were presided over by two little barometer girls, one in blue skirts and the other in pink, like the changeable little dancers on the cards that foretell a change of weather.

When the visitors had passed under the rainbow their suspicions were confirmed that this fair had something to do with the weather, for they were greeted by the Weather Man himself in the person of Harmon Peters, the husband of the president of the club. The idea had originated one stormy afternoon when the committee had met to weave their plans for some money-making scheme to get funds for the Christmas relief of the town's unemployed.

The Way it Grew

"CAN no one talk about anything but the weather?" Mrs. Peters had asked in desperation.

And that had brought the gaunt Miss Elberson to her feet with one of her brilliant ideas. "Since the weather is always so interesting," she drawled, "I don't see why we couldn't turn the subject to good account and give a Christmas-weather party of some kind."

"A 'brite and fair, clowdy but no rain,' you mean," remarked Una Lovejoy half sarcastically.

But that had started it, and the idea spread like butter in hot weather. And so they had asked Mr. Peters to act as a sort of master of ceremonies and dress like the Weather Man. His costume was, to say the least, original; "weathered," his wife called it. He wore trousers shrunken almost to the knees, rubber boots, a straw hat and a linen duster. In one hand was a huge green cotton umbrella, in the other a palm-leaf fan. Over one shoulder was a pair of skates, and over the other inflated water wings. A sign across his back had printed on it: "Hoping for the best and prepared for the worst."

For his aides he had half a dozen weather prophets, members of the club, who were dressed in white robes with tall, pointed red hats. Each one bore a placard with a prophecy upon it, something like this:

A late spring—someone forgot to set the four o'clocks.
Early summer—straw hats are out in Curley's window.
Cold winter—squirrels are getting the nuts early. Look out!

The prophets policed the crowd and kept it moving.

Each booth or feature of the fair had been planned to bear out a weather forecast. The idea was to make the features numerous, practical, and not too expensive, and thus distribute the fun and the financial burden. So Una and some of the other girls had turned sign painters and made brilliant red-and-white placards for each booth with a forecast on each. For "Showers" a red-and-white-striped awning was erected to look like the outside of a shop where one takes shelter during a shower, and under it was an umbrella mender, a real one hired on a profit-sharing basis to mend and recover umbrellas. Good-looking, cheap umbrellas, excellent Christmas gifts, were for sale here too.

THERE WAS AN UMBRELLA MENDER, A REAL ONE

There was a "Rainy Day" booth also, a table under a great open umbrella, from which tin coins jingled. Here they sold banks, pocketbooks and budget books. The banks were jelly glasses with the tin tops enameled and decorated and pierced with a slit for the coins to pass through. They were put on the glasses permanently with plaster of Paris. The purses were little change purses, cut triangular and bound, and folded three times, fastening with a snap fastener—very taking when cut from brocade, kid gloves or black oilcloth. The budget books were also made by Miss Elberson's committee, who had originated this booth. They held typewritten pages for accounts, bound with cord and pencil, within a decorated cover of white oilcloth. The committee had to sit up nights to supply the demand.

A Real Novelty in Booths

"FRESH AND BREEZY" was the sign over a toy booth. Here several concealed electric fans kept moving a large assortment of gayly colored balloons and kites that floated from the top of a huge Christmas tree. On the counter around the tree were sold fans, whistles, horns and other "wind instruments." There were plenty of novelty toys bought surreptitiously by parents for Christmas stockings.

"Cloudy; Brighter Later" headed a booth where all kinds of cleaning fluids and powders were sold. Some were made from carefully guarded secret formulas of the town's most notable housewives. Mrs. Harbison's pet silver-cleaning paste was sold out the first night. There were also some of the best cleansers on the market, purchased wholesale through one of the grocers and sold at retail prices. Then there were all kinds of polishing cloths, colored cheesecloth dusters with blanket-stitched edges, Canton flannel mitts, and so on, each packed in a pretty red gift box with a tiny mirror on the lid. Jennie Landis, whom nobody had ever suspected of being funny, made the hit of the evening and held the crowds around this table with her comical impersonations of public demonstrators.

The candy table, labeled "Changeable," offered an element of chance for those who wanted it. It was a large round table with a painted wooden weathercock revolving in the middle. The table was divided into sections by the points of the compass, and within the sections lay various quantities and kinds of candy. One paid ten cents a spin, and where the cock pointed when he came to a standstill was your purchase; perhaps a few chocolates, a bag of homemade fudge, an order for Christmas candy on one of the town's confectioners, or nothing at all, for there were a few blanks on the table to even things up.

"Thunder" was the sign over a noisy table full of small drums, rattles and other noise makers that children and grown-ups like around holiday time. This was an effective booth with banks of gray-cardboard clouds behind which flashes of lightning appeared with suspicious regularity from hidden electric-light bulbs. Needless to say, this booth was a favorite with the youngsters. When business needed boosting, realistic tin thunder could be heard from behind the scenes.

Fun With Refreshments

PRETTY little Mrs. Voorhees presided at the "Fog" booth, which was the work of her own hands. It was all draped in pale gray chiffon, and for a back drop had a city scene at night pricked with twinkling yellow lights. She was dressed in gray, too, and sold sheer, lacy gift things—embroidery, handkerchiefs, underwear, and the like.

Cakes were chanced off in a most entertaining way. A map of the United States was mounted to represent a weather map, with "Disturbances in the Interior" as the forecast above it. Here one paid a nickel for a little flag to pin in the map. Young Bob Telford, custodian of the map, then picked the name of a state from a hat. This he held until all the flags had been placed, one in each state and territory. The fortunate flag that corresponded with the state in Bob's hand got the cake.

All the refreshments were served from booths, too, in cafeteria fashion. One took a tray and approached the booth labeled "Dry" for lemonade, coffee, tea or chocolate; then to "Intense Heat" for hot dishes—doggies, baked beans or chicken croquettes; to "Continued Cold" for sandwiches or salads; to "Freezing" for ice cream; and to "Snow," a popular booth where snowballs made from shaved ice with fruit sirup were served in paper cups. The booths themselves added much to the atmosphere of the scene, for the first was a hut of dry cornstalks, the second an oasis of palms, the third hung with paper icicles and the last an igloo.

There was a grab bag of course. "It wouldn't be fair to the children without one," as Lottie Ferris said. So she impersonated old Æolus with a bag of winds. "Who would like some nice fresh winds?" she went about calling in a nasal voice, and for five cents you could "put in your thumb and pull out a plum" of a small wrapped package.

The fortune telling was taken care of by the Weather Bureau. A corner platform was rigged up like a roof top with telescope, globe, and so on, and an astrologer, the oldest of weather men, who read your fortune in a constellation of gold stars, one of which he picked from the blue curtain behind him and handed to you for ten cents. The person chosen for this part was one who could patter on learnedly about Venus and Virgo, Aries and Gemini; whether or not the fate that was handed out seemed appropriate was a minor consideration.

You can imagine how popular the Christmas "Brite and Fair" was in Stockton. When it rained on the third night, and the admission fee was waived according to the committee's promise, the place was jammed, for something for nothing will bring folks out in the teeth of a blizzard. Wherein the Entertainment Committee for the Christmas For All Fund was wise.

EACH BOOTH OR FEATURE HAD BEEN PLANNED TO BEAR OUT A WEATHER FORECAST

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FOR THE TABLE

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said Naomi, "and learn my lesson every day, and care for Baby Jonas when thou art busy."

And with this hope to comfort her, Naomi lay quietly down upon her bed and let her thoughts go back to her trip to Jerusalem and its sad home-coming. For the night's rest had not cured Naomi.

She had awakened with swollen eyelids that were so heavy she could not hold them up, and sharp little stabs of pain had caused her to moan and twist in the arms of kind Aunt Miriam, who held her tenderly on the long homeward ride.

Then came days and nights of pain, and a visit from one of the great doctors of Palestine. And this great doctor ordered poultices of various kinds.

At last the day arrived when Naomi was free from pain, but when also, alas, she could not see the familiar room with its carved chest and gay cushions and little table pushed against the wall, nor the loving, anxious faces of her father and mother and Ezra.

Then, indeed, was Naomi in anguish as she questioned her mother.

"I cannot see thee! Where art thou, mother? Is it night? How black it is! Oh, am I blind?"

And Naomi clung fast to her father and mother, as if they must save her from this dreadful fate.

"Blind!" thought her mother, remembering with a shudder the numberless figures that stretched pitiful hands by the Bethlehem roadside.

"My little Naomi, blind?"

"An amulet will cure her," said worried Samuel stoutly.

"Be not downhearted, my little maid. Thy father will buy for thee an amulet that will open those brown eyes of thine wider than ever before."

SO NAOMI wore about her neck for weeks a small, three-cornered bag, in which was sewn a scrap of parchment taken from a religious book. And how were the contents of this little three-cornered bag to restore Naomi's eyesight? Why, by charming away the wicked spirit who had cast an evil eye upon her.

Not a thought that Naomi, daily handling sick little Three Legs, might have caught the malady that first darkened the vision of the poor little animal and then caused the frail life to flicker out altogether.

Naomi missed her pet sorely, but its death was only one more grief added to the burden that overshadowed all her days. She could no longer play in the garden. Her well, begun so happily, was neglected, though not forgotten, and little Jonas was the leader now, guiding her faltering steps. Her friends, Rachel and Rebekah, at the first mention of the evil eye had looked askance, and now they never came to play nor to entertain her with their talk.

Little lame Enoch, from across the road, proved a faithful friend, and Naomi felt comfortable with him as a playmate, for he, too, suffered from a handicap, and yet was cheerful and gay notwithstanding.

He knew a host of stories told him by his old grandmother, and the long hours slipped away quickly while their little tongues chattered, though their hands and feet were pathetically still.

But of all the comfort Naomi knew, apart from the love of her father and mother, the companionship of Ezra was the greatest. He amused her, he waited upon her, he revived her drooping spirits with his own high hopes and plans for her.

"THOU shalt see again, Naomi," he would declare confidently. "All the cures have not been tried yet. Thou art not like the beggars by the roadside. Say not that again, or I will dip thee in the well behind the myrtle bush that thou wilt be digging ere long. Most of the wayside beggars are old men, whilst thou, Naomi, art young; thine eyes look as clear and strong as mine. Wait until my father has taken thee to the pool at Bethesda."

The Bethesda pool lay in Jerusalem on the Temple mount, a stone's throw from the Sheep Gate of the Court of the Gentiles where Naomi had lingered before the sheep pens on the afternoon that now seemed so far away, and Samuel the weaver purposed to take her thither.

Even while the little girl lay thinking long, long thoughts and wishing for daybreak, the moments slipped by, the fourth watch or morning came, and Naomi's mother rose to prepare the meal, so the travelers might have an early start.

A stout little donkey, borrowed from the khan stable, carried Naomi and her father briskly over the familiar Jerusalem highway. The little girl remembered how happy she had been on her journey with Aunt Miriam and how all the world had seemed gay that morning. Then she recalled the "tap, tap, tap" of the blind men on the road, and she hid her face in her father's cloak and trembled.

After that, all the rest of the way, her little heart was full of sorrow. Try again as she would to think of happier days, she recalled the "tap, tap, tap" of the blind men on the road.

"Oh, that the Angel of the Pool may open my eyes!" prayed Naomi.

THE pool of Bethesda was a pretty spot. About it had been built five porches, and in their shelter lay the sick and the withered, the lame and the blind, waiting for a chance to push their way in the moment the waters began to move.

When Naomi and her father arrived the pool lay still in the sunlight, so Samuel established himself close to the edge with his arm about Naomi.

"Perhaps I shall see mother's face tonight," the little girl thought as they waited. "And Ezra will be at the village gate waiting for me. He promised. And I am to wave my girdle at the first turn in the road if my eyes are opened. Oh, Angel of the Pool, remember me, Naomi! Remember me here in the dark!"

Naomi's father, who had never taken his eyes from the pool, leaned forward eagerly. "It moves, Naomi," he whispered. "The Angel comes, although we see him not. Be ready, for I must act quickly."

The surface of the pool began to heave and swell, and at the precise moment that the water boiled up Samuel bent over with Naomi in his arms and dipped her head under the water once, twice, three times. Dripping, sputtering and crying, Naomi was placed upon her feet, while her father endeavored to wipe away the water that ran down into her neck and stained her little robe.

"Dost thou see, Naomi?" asked Samuel with a tremble in his voice. "Open thine eyes and look! Dost thou see, my little pomegranate?"

If the Angel of the Pool failed them, where should he turn for help?

Naomi obediently opened her brown eyes and stared, sightless as ever, into her father's face.

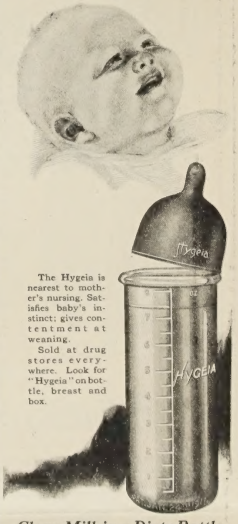
The Angel of the Pool had failed them!

IT WAS the winter season in Palestine. In the darkness and despair that followed her trip to the pool of Bethesda Naomi had not cared what the weather might be. Huddled over the brazier of charcoal that smoldered under a rug in a shallow hole in the middle of the floor, she had not heeded the wild dash of rain against the house nor its melancholy dripping in the deserted garden. Even the excitement of Ezra and Jonas over a slight fall of snow, the first either one had ever seen, had failed to rouse her.

Samuel and his wife were troubled beyond words at this calamity that had come upon

(Continued on Page 148)

Hygeia
—the SAFE Nursing Bottle



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By adding the extra touch of holiday spirit, which bright Dennison seals and tags can give, you assure success to your Christmas gifts.

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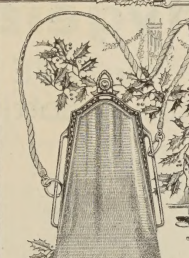
What Next ?

GIFTS THAT LAST



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The "Safegard" model pictured is *new*—an exclusive Whiting & Davis design. The rings at the sides slide to the top whenever the bag is lifted, keeping it closed, even though unclasped. Made, of course, of the famous original Whiting *soldered* mesh—the strongest and most durable.

An attractive "Safegard" design.

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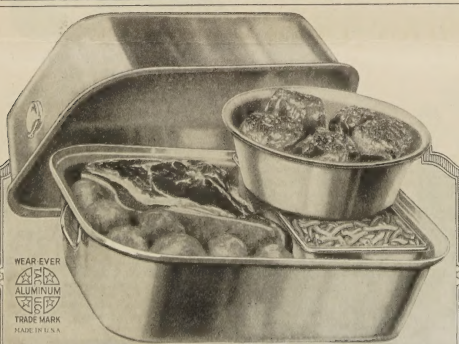

The Joy of Cooking

The kettle chuckles contentedly; the golden brown potatoes sizzle in the pan; appetizing odors from the savory roast inspire delightful thoughts of the meal to come.

No wonder women are happy in their kitchens—and no wonder they have them equipped with

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The Aluminum Cooking Utensil Co., New Kensington, Pa.
In Canada: Northern Aluminum Co., Ltd., Toronto

Christmas Light

(Continued from Page 147)

their child. Ezra was at his wits' ends, for all his schemes and devices to amuse failed and the hollow words of encouragement died upon his honest lips. Samuel, too, had a fresh worry of which Naomi knew nothing.

"Aye, Samuel the weaver's child is blind," said the neighbors, wagging their heads in knowing fashion. "What sin hath he committed, think you, that this calamity befalls him? Truly the way of the transgressor is hard."

"It may be that his wife is the sinner," was whispered about, "or perhaps both."

And little by little the village people turned aside when they saw Samuel coming, and fewer and fewer were the friendly words said to Naomi's mother when she went patiently down to the fountain for her supply of water.

No one was happy in the little household until one day Aunt Miriam called Ezra and whispered in his ear. His eyes opened wide and his face brightened, and for more than a week he neglected his friends, the shepherds, and spent all his spare time at the khan. Then, one afternoon, when the rain had ceased and the little olive leaves glistened in the cold, bright light, Naomi's mother approached the forlorn little figure crouched in a corner and raised her to her feet. "Here is thy warm cloak, beloved," she said. "Before the door stand thy aunt, thy father and thy brother. They wait for thee. And, little Naomi, there waits a surprise for thee also."

FROM behind the door Naomi heard an unfamiliar stamping, a running about and Ezra's excited voice. "Be careful, Jonas," he called sharply; "wilt thou be stepped on? Naomi, where art thou?"

Naomi's mother led out the white-faced little girl, and Samuel took her gently by the hand.

"A gift for thee, little Naomi," said he, "from thy good Aunt Miriam. Put out thy hand and guess."

Naomi stretched out a timid hand and touched a soft, furry nose. "A donkey!" said Naomi. "To take me for a ride?"

"Aye," burst out Ezra, his face shining with unselfish joy, "to take thee for a ride every day and everywhere—up and down the hills and round about. We shall go everywhere together, thou and I."

"Speak more plainly, Ezra," said Aunt Miriam, seeing the puzzled look upon his sister's face. "The donkey is thine, Naomi. Thy Uncle Simon and I have given it to thee. Ezra means that he will take thee riding upon it whenever and wherever thou wilt."

"Now the trick," cried Ezra, who had been hopping from foot to foot. "Have I not been teaching him for more than a week? Say thy lesson well, little donkey. Stand here before him, Naomi." Samuel placed Naomi in position. "Thy donkey's name, Naomi," went on Ezra, "is Michmash, because he comes from the town of that name. Now place thy hands upon the tips of his ears."

SAMUEL guided the little girl's hands until they rested upon the tips of the long gray ears.

"Now say his name slowly," instructed Ezra, his face aglow.

"Mich—" said Naomi, and down came a furry ear "—mash," and down came the other. Then the little donkey moved both ears violently and turned a patient eye upon his young teacher as if asking praise.

"He did it! He did it!" cried the teacher. "He did not forget his lesson, and he will do it every time. Michmash!" And as the long ears fell again Ezra threw his arms about Naomi and hugged her close. "Wilt thou come for a ride with me now?" he whispered. "The sun shines and the wind blows, and it will be pleasant out upon the hills."

So seated upon the back of Michmash Naomi rode off, with such a bright look upon her wan face that her father and mother could not help thinking that better days were in store for them all.

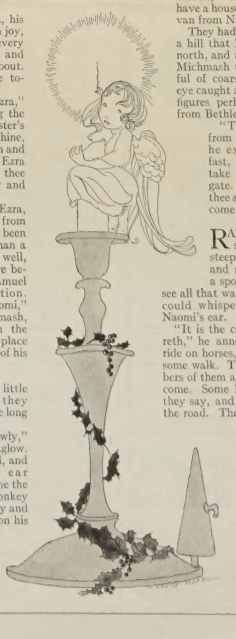
Every pleasant day Ezra, leading Michmash, took Naomi wrapped in her little scarlet cloak out riding, and as they moved along in the crisp, bracing air they talked—long, long talks of what they were passing, of Ezra's day at school, or of the thoughts and fancies that filled Naomi's active little mind.

"EZRA," she said one day, as Michmash plodded his way securely up the side of one of the stony little Judean hills, "what think you of the Messiah? Dost think that he will open the eyes of the blind when he cometh, Ezra?"

"The Messiah, Naomi," said Ezra slowly, "will do what the Prophet Isaiah promised of him—never fear. He will open the eyes of the blind and unstop the ears of the deaf; he will make the lame man leap and the dumb man sing for joy. When he cometh all Israel will rejoice. The Kingdom of God will come, and the Messiah will rule in righteousness." Ezra spoke warmly. He had been well taught in school and synagogue and had listened carefully to his father and his friends as they talked in the market place and elsewhere.

"Think now of this new numbering of all the world," he went on. "Every man must travel to the town whence his family sprang, whether he live near or far and whether he be rich enough to stand a journey. And why? Because the emperor at Rome has ordered so. But when the Messiah cometh, things will not be so."

"Mother says that many have already traveled to Bethlehem to be enrolled," said Naomi, "and that we shall have a houseful when the caravan from Nazareth comes in."



They had reached the top of a hill that looked toward the north, and as Ezra waited for Michmash to finish a mouthful of coarse grass the boy's eye caught a line of tiny black figures perhaps a mile away from Bethlehem village.

"There is the caravan from Nazareth, now!" he exclaimed. "Hold fast, Naomi, and I will take thee down to the gate. There I will tell thee all the sights as they come in."

RATTLING over the stones and down the steep paths, the brother and sister soon reached a spot where Ezra could see all that was needful and then could whisper what he saw in Naomi's ear.

"It is the caravan from Nazareth," he announced, "and they ride on horses, camels, mules; but some walk. There are great numbers of them and more are still to come. Some have fallen behind, they say, and are far back upon the road. They are very weary."

When Ezra and Naomi reached home they found that, as their mother had said, their house was full to overflowing with company from the Nazareth caravan. Every inch of floor space in Samuel's little house was

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Christmas Light

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occupied that night when the soft quilts were spread out and the family and their guests lay down to rest, and when Ezra came in late from feeding Michmash, the dim light of the little oil lamp, that burned each night in all but the poorest of Jewish homes, showed him a floor so crowded that he knew not how to reach his own bed, spread at his father's right hand.

"Father!" whispered Ezra.

"My son," answered Samuel in a cautious voice.

"Father, it is so crowded here I would fain spend the night with Old Eli in the fields with the sheep. May I go? Old Eli said but yesterday that I had neglected him of late."

"Go, my son. Give greetings to Old Eli, and God's peace attend thee."

So Ezra slipped out under the dark, starry sky to join the shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

EZRA picked his way carefully down the dark Bethlehem lanes until he reached the town gate, swung shut and locked hours before at sunset. "Nathan! Nathan!" he called.

At length the old gatekeeper peered out from his little booth and muttered a friendly greeting to the lad.

"Nathan, I would go down into the fields with Shepherd Eli to-night," explained Ezra politely. "Wilt thou not let me pass through the strait gate—just this once? Old Eli is thy friend and mine. Do the favor for him, I beg of thee, and I will bless thee all my days."

Nathan could not help laughing at the old-fashioned speech of the boy. "Whether I do it for thee or for Shepherd Eli, the deed is done," he cackled, and threw open the small gate standing beside the large one and known as the strait gate.

A walk of two miles brought Ezra to the pasture land where the shepherd lad David had watched his father's sheep. At the end of the road Ezra could distinguish a number of dark forms huddled before one of the caves in the hillside. Within this shallow cave lay the flock asleep, and before it, on his rough bed of brushwood and rushes, sat Shepherd Eli, with his dogs to keep him company. Beside him lay his shepherd's crook, his club tipped with iron the better to protect his charges, and his sling with which he was wont to throw stones just beyond his sheep to bring them back when they were going astray.

The two great sheep dogs, gaunt and rough, who had spied Ezra on the edge of the pasture land long before he had seen them, leaped fawning upon him with sharp yelps of affection.

"DOWN! Down!" cried Ezra, half laughing, half impatient. "Eli, my father sends thee greeting. As for me, I would fain spend the night with thee here in the fields. I am crowded out of my father's house by visitors from Nazareth who come to be listed for the census. I will make myself useful, Eli. Perhaps thou canst steal a nap while I keep watch of the sheep. But why art thou alone to-night? Where are the other shepherds? And the dogs?"

"Thou art always welcome, lad," responded Shepherd Eli. "As for sleep, never was I more wakeful than at this moment, for there is something strange in the air, lad; the very dogs feel it. They lie quiet and still; they neither twist nor turn. Something beyond our ken is a-wing to-night."

"But, Eli," said Ezra, "if it were wolves or jackals, the dogs would be barking. And where are the other shepherds?"

"Nay, child," said Eli, drawing his sheepskin cloak about him, "I look not for wild beasts to-night. But the other shepherds read not the signs as do I. Thieves lurk near at hand, say they, and with the dogs they go to rout them out."

"What dost thou expect, Eli?" asked Ezra timidly. He was frightened and thrilled in turn at this talk.

The old man sat with his face turned to the sky, powdered thick with stars. "'He numbereth the stars. He calleth them all by name,'" said Eli softly. "Expect? Child, I know not what I expect, except that He who hath promised us salvation from our enemies and remission of our sins shall keep His holy word. And there are signs that the time draws near."

"But, Eli," Ezra began in his shrill little voice.

The old shepherd cut him short with a sudden gesture. "The men return," muttered Eli. "How many thieves caught ye, friends?" he called out. "Did ye surprise the enemy in his lair?"

The shepherds filed in through the narrow opening and threw themselves heavily on the ground beside Eli and the lad.

"Thieves? Nay," said one of the shepherds. "We saw naught amiss, and had but the walk for our pains."

They wrapped their heavy mantles about them and talked together in low voices. No one seemed disposed to sleep, though the day's work had been hard and all needed a night's rest. Suddenly the old shepherd grasped Ezra's arm.

One of the younger men was speaking. "The night has grown so still!" said he. "Note ye that the wind dies down and that a hush falls o'er all?" His voice ended on a trembling note. He covered his face with his mantle and fell forward among his prostrate companions.

Only old Eli, with his arm about shaking little Ezra, held his white head erect, joyous, confident, trustful.

FOR "an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

"And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom
He is well pleased."

Ezra, strengthened by Eli's arm, which did not waver, ventured to open his eyes. He saw a brilliant whiteness, clear as crystal, that seemed to light the world from end to end. High above, the sky was filled with clouds of rose and amber and amethyst. All the glories of sunrise and of sunset were mingled there. Did he catch a flutter of white pinions? Did he glimpse a Leader, majestic, terrible, yet radiant with gracious love?

Even as he stared, unable to move, the song grew fainter, the colors faded and vanished. The echo of the angels' song rang in his ears. To his dying day it would haunt his memory.

The muffled figures on the ground stirred and stood erect. Overhead the stars burned in the frosty sky.

THE silence was broken by old Eli. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us," he said.

Over the rough, uneven ground hastened the shepherds, across the familiar pasture land, over the cornfields to the sharp rise that would lead them past the Bethlehem inn.

Clinging to the hillside and facing the cornfields was the stable of the inn, a rough cave in the limestone rock. On a rope stretched across the wide entrance swung a lantern, whose dim light twinkled and flickered before the eyes of the shepherds as they came up the hill.

Old Eli quickened his pace, Ezra at his heels. "And this is the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

At the stable entrance Ezra hung back. He saw a man come forward out of the shadows and talk with Eli. With a single gesture the old shepherd motioned his companions to join him. Lost for a moment in the gloom Ezra saw them again speaking, bending forward, then falling upon their knees.

(Continued on Page 152)

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Christmas Light

(Continued from Page 151)

The stars had faded and an early morning wind was blowing chill when at last the shepherds made their way out of the stable. The lamp, still swinging, burned pale in the dawn, but its faint light fell across the white face of a little boy who lurked in the doorway and whose cold hand clutched Old Eli as he came exulting forth.

"Praise God! Praise God for His mercy, justice and truth! Praise ——" Old Eli started at the cold touch and looked down with eyes that glowed with an inward light. "Child, what doest thou here? Hinder me not. I go now to spread the good tidings—to praise and to glorify God."

Ezra opened his dry lips. "Hast found Him?" he asked. "Is it the Messiah? Is it the Christ?"

"Aye, child, 'tis as the angel said," answered Eli happily—"a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger—come to bring peace on earth, our Saviour, our long-looked-for Messiah! Glory to God in the highest! Glory!"

Ezra turned and, with the speed of an arrow from its bow, ran swiftly up the steep road toward home.

THE rising sun pushed through a bank of purple cloud and touched with long, rosy beams the roof of Samuel the weaver's house. In one corner lay a dark heap, heedless of sunlight, morning breeze or bird, conscious only of the blackest misery, the deepest hopelessness that an eight-year-old heart can know. It was Naomi. Her little face was pinched and pitiful.

"Did they think I could not hear?" she cried aloud in her fullness of heart. "Did Elisabeth, the wife of Amos, think that I was deaf as well as blind that she should say aloud, 'The child Naomi will never see again. There is no hope.' No hope! And perhaps I shall live to be as old as lame Enoch's grandmother. Who will care for me then? Who will give me shelter and food? Amos, of Nazareth, thought of that too. I heard him though he whispered low: 'She will be always a burden. It were better that she should die.' I heard him. Die? I cannot die. My mother and father will die and leave me, and Ezra and Jonas will weary of me."

She sank down in a little heap and rocked to and fro. Her misfortune seemed too dreadful to be borne. As she swayed back and forth, torn by her misery, there came to her, like balm upon a wound, the familiar, comforting words that her mother and father had used over and over of late, to soothe the little girl's pain and to encourage hope in the sad hearts of them all:

I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah In the land of the living. Wait for Jehovah: Be strong, and let thy heart take courage; Yea, wait thou for Jehovah.

Naomi rose to her feet. About her was the soft sunlight, over her head the deep blue sky. She turned her sightless face toward Jerusalem and spoke as if to a friend present. "Yea, Jehovah," she said in simple faith, "I will wait for Thee, and for Thy Messiah who will open the eyes of the blind.

"Surely when Messiah cometh I shall see. And until then, I will wait and pray for His coming."

On the outer stairway that led from the ground to the roof stood Ezra, breathless, his hand pressed against his side. He had run all the way, without stopping, up the steep lanes from the Bethlehem stable and now, pausing to rest an instant before speaking to Naomi, he could not help overhearing the last words she said.

"So thou wilt wait?" he whispered softly. "Nay, my little sister, thy time of waiting is over. The Messiah is here!"

Full of a great new hope, the sight of Naomi's tear-stained face and groping, outstretched hands made him long to tell her the good tidings at once. But the boy's love for his unhappy little sister made him wise beyond his years.

"If I tell her, and it does not come to pass as she wishes, it will break her heart," he argued. "The Messiah is but a tiny baby now, weak and helpless. It may be He must grow to manhood before He can heal the blind, the deaf and the sick. I will not tell her yet."

SO EZRA clattered noisily up the remaining steps of the stairway, calling out: "Naomi! Naomi! Where art thou? Oh, here thou art! I have come to take thee down to the inn stable to show thee something there. And what it is, thou couldst never guess."

"Show me? What could I see? Nay, I will go nowhere, Ezra," she answered sadly. "If I went I could not see thy wondrous sight."

"But this is something to feel," said Ezra coaxingly, putting his arm about Naomi and leading her gently toward the stairway. "Tell me, dost thou remember when young Deborah, the vine-dresser's wife, laid something soft and warm in thine arms?"

"A baby, Ezra?" asked Naomi. "A baby at the inn stable?"

"Aye," said Ezra, "a Baby. A Baby born in a stable and lying in a manger because there was no room last night at the inn."

"But I cannot see it, Ezra," said Naomi. "Why should I go? I cannot see."

"Dost thou remember, too, how Deborah's baby clung to thy finger?" said the crafty Ezra, guiding her tenderly down the steps as he talked. "And did ye not find it pleasant to hold? You rocked it to and fro all day long, Naomi."

"Aye, it was pleasant," admitted Naomi. "But Deborah brought the baby to me. I will not go to the khan, Ezra. I do not wish to meet anyone. There will be people to stare at me and to talk in the lanes and at the stable."

"Naomi," said Ezra desperately, "dost thou love me?"

"Aye, thou knowest that I love thee," answered Naomi in surprise.

"Then, to please me, come to the inn stable," was Ezra's quick response. "Ask me no questions and delay not, but come. It is early, Naomi. We will meet no one, I hope and trust. Give me thy hand and come."

Naomi instantly slipped a thin little hand into her brother's outstretched palm. "For love of thee, Ezra," she said sweetly.

Down the quiet road Ezra led Naomi, carefully guiding her over the stones and ruts in the rough highway. Unobserved, they slipped quietly through the town gate.

When a turn in the road brought the khan in view Ezra threw his arm about his sister and they quickened their steps.

Past the inn and round to the stable door he led her—led her so tenderly—and there they halted.

"Naomi," said Ezra, his voice trembling with hope and fear, "thou knowest the stable well. Enter, and walk forward until thy feet touch the straw before the manger. There lies the Babe."

With a gentle push Ezra started Naomi toward the Mother and Child, whose figures he could dimly see on a heap of straw at the back of the cave.

Then in the shadow of the doorway Ezra fell upon his knees. "O Lord," he prayed, "I know that this is Thy Messiah. I believe that Thou hast sent Him. Thou hast promised of old that when Messiah cometh He shall open the eyes of the blind. I would that He might open my sister Naomi's eyes. If Thou wilt answer this prayer, Jehovah, I will promise Thee anything. I will be Thy faithful servant, I will be an obedient son, I will learn my lessons well at school and never shirk.

"I will promise anything Thou mayst ask of me, if Thy Messiah will only open my sister Naomi's eyes. Hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer."

Within the stable Naomi crept cautiously forward. Her footsteps lagged, for she had no heart in this undertaking. What pleasure could there be for her in visiting a stranger's baby which she could not even see? Her heart was so full of misery that there was no room in it for joy to enter. She longed to sink down on the stable floor. Only her love for Ezra kept her moving. She felt the straw before the manger beneath her feet, and she dropped to her knees and stretched out a timid hand.

Yes, the Mother and Child were before her.

SHE fingered the hem of the cloak wrapped about the young Mother, but she could not bring herself to touch the little Child.

"I care not! I care not!" thought Naomi hopelessly.

"What to me is this Baby? Why should Ezra wish me to visit this Child?"

As if in answer to her unspoken question, with a sudden lovely gesture the Child leaned forward. His tiny fingers touched Naomi's forehead and His hands rested for an instant upon her darkened eyes.

Naomi opened and closed her eyes rapidly. She rose to her feet and stared about her. Did she really see the nose of an ox thrusting itself over the stall? Or did she only dream the mound of hay, and on it the young Mother wrapped in a wide, blue cloak, and in her arms a Child, at the velvet touch of Whose tiny hands the black curtain had dropped from before her eyes?

Naomi rubbed her hands together and looked down at them. Yes, they were her own hands. Her dress? Yes, that was an old friend, the yellow-and-red striped robe. She had worn it the day in the garden that she had given her four scarlet poppies in exchange for little Three Legs.

THEN it was true. She did see. But how had it happened? Why at the touch of this Baby's hand had her sight been restored?

"Ezra!" she called, not daring to stir. "Ezra!"

Ezra's face, white under the tan, showed itself round the stable door.

"Ezra," cried Naomi, "I can see! I know not how it is, but I was blind and now I see. Oh, Ezra, the Baby touched me and I can see."

Ezra came swiftly forward.

His eyes were full of tears, but his face was radiant. He knelt before the Mother, who was watching the scene with wondering eyes, and the Child, Who slept now in His Mother's arms.

Ezra pulled Naomi down beside him. "Naomi, it is the Christ Child," he whispered. "The Messiah has come! Our Saviour lies before us! Oh, Naomi, the Messiah hath opened the eyes of the blind! The Lord hath heard my prayer!"

And bending low before Him, they worshiped at the Christ Child's feet.

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YOU can think of so many nice things you'd love to give mother, father, husband or little folks (not to mention good friends of yours) this Christmas—but have you enough money?

Then, too, that wardrobe of yours very likely needs the addition of some pretty new clothes. You do want to look your very best at the gatherings of friends and relatives sure to take place during the holidays.

All this takes so much money! And the thought of January bills may be worrying you too. So I won't wait another minute to tell you of the splendid plan THE HOME JOURNAL has worked out for its girl and women readers which will enable you to pick up not a few but a *lot* of extra dollars between now and Christmas, if you hurry and write me. There is an exceptional opening for you *right now.* It will require only a few spare hours, will not cost you a penny, will not interfere with your other plans, yet you can make enough, easily, for all your Christmas gifts and have some "left over" for those January bills or a snug little bank account!

Mothers and daughters alike can make these extra dollars. A married woman who wants money for her children's Christmas and a girl in her teens who just *has to have* a new party dress both can obtain the money for what they want if they write me now!

MRS. CLARA PRATT is one of the many JOURNAL readers who have already availed themselves of this plan. What delightful success has been hers! Mrs. Pratt used to worry constantly about where the money for extra expenses of her household was coming from—but no longer. Now she knows how to make $25 or more herself within ten days.

It came about in this way: This little home-maker and her husband have just bought an attractive bungalow, and it has been what Clara has laughingly termed a "tight squeeze" to meet the payments and keep those three lively youngsters of theirs in shoes and stockings and rubbers, not to mention a hundred and one other unexpected demands that have been made on an all-too-slender purse. And here comes Christmas! Clara Pratt, motherlike, does not want those little folks of hers to be disappointed and slighted at Christmastime, and *they won't be.* Their mother is going to see to that!

For Mrs. Pratt has read my message here in THE HOME JOURNAL, addressed to all you JOURNAL readers: "If you want more money, write me." And she *has* written. And—let her tell the rest of it:

I want to thank you for that prompt reply to my letter, and for that dandy plan you Journal folks have given me for making extra money at this season of the year, when every dollar is so welcome. You are responsible for over $25 I have made in exactly ten days since receiving your letter, and I'll make lots more before Christmas. I am delighted.

WHO wouldn't be delighted to receive $25 as easily as that? How about *you?* All I can say to you, then, is that I'd like nothing better than to be "responsible" for your putting just such another $25 in *your* purse, and "lots more" between now and Christmas. You'll do it, too, if you will just *hurry up* and write me, so that I can start you off without any more delay.

Are you married? A business girl? A teacher? A stay-at-home? Still in school? No difference! Come ahead! Use this dandy plan of ours, as Mrs. Pratt describes it, to make money in *your* spare minutes. You should make every bit as much as these others. And without a penny of expense to you.

Mrs. Bornot is saving to pay for her little home. Marie Loizeaux is working for music lessons and Christmas presents and a bank account. Mrs. Graves wants a new buffet. Josephine Keller likes to take a nice trip away every so often. And these girls and women have so far made from $20 to *$150* apiece, to spend as they please. They, too, will receive a great deal more before Christmas.

A college member has made $60 "without much work" to pay for pretty clothes and good times. One mother has made $70 to send her two little girls to school in town. A grandmother made $10 in a single day recently, which will be spent for the filling of certain little Christmas stockings.

Sit down this very minute and write me a little note saying "Tell me how Mrs. Pratt and others are making so much extra money at this season of the year. I want to make some, too, between now and Christmas." You will! I'll send the "way to do it" by return mail as soon as I receive your letter. Address me as the

Manager of The Girls' Club

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